

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 12**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Block and Salas**  
**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bill Berryhill, Cook, Fuentes,**  
**Gilmore, Jeffries, Lieu, Monning, Portantino, Price, and Silva)**  
**(Coauthors: Senators DeSaulnier, Florez, and Wright)**

March 27, 2009

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 12—Relative to benefits for Filipino Americans who fought in World War II.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 12, as introduced, Block. Filipino veterans: benefits.

This measure would request that the Congress and the President of the United States enact legislation granting veterans’ benefits to the Filipino Americans who fought in World War II in the United States Armed Forces.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The Republic of the Philippines (hereafter the  
2 Philippines) was a colony of the United States, and, as a result,  
3 the United States government possessed authority over that nation;  
4 and  
5 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1941, in anticipation of war with Japan,  
6 President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order calling over 200,000  
7 Filipino soldiers to serve in the United States Armed Forces in the  
8 Far East (USAFFE); and  
9 WHEREAS, Ten hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the  
10 United States military bases in the Philippines were bombed,  
11 causing the war to spill onto the Filipino people; and

1 WHEREAS, On March 27, 1942, Congress passed Title 8 of  
2 the Second War Powers Act, which provided that noncitizens who  
3 served in active duty in the United States Armed Forces during  
4 World War II shall be granted United States citizenship, meaning  
5 that every USAFFE soldier had the right to equal treatment under  
6 the law; and

7 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, the United States surrendered  
8 the Philippines to Japan, leaving 75,000 USAFFE and regular  
9 soldiers to the Bataan Death March where close to 10,000 died  
10 along the trudge to P.O.W. camps; and

11 WHEREAS, Even after the American surrender, Filipinos  
12 continued to resist, gathering thousands more soldiers and forming  
13 guerilla units, who, in coordination with United States command,  
14 conducted operations, collected intelligence, and helped prepare  
15 for the American return; and

16 WHEREAS, On September 2, 1945, Japanese military command  
17 surrendered the Philippines back to American forces ending World  
18 War II on the Philippine islands, and Philippine nationals who  
19 served in the war began filing for naturalization at the United States  
20 Embassy in Manila; and

21 WHEREAS, Filipino men and women served courageously in  
22 the fight for freedom and democracy during World War II, under  
23 the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur; and

24 WHEREAS, After the war, the New Philippine Scouts were  
25 formed to help reestablish United States authority in the Pacific,  
26 causing thousands more Filipino soldiers to be called to serve the  
27 United States; and

28 WHEREAS, In November of 1945, adjudication of applications  
29 for naturalization of Filipino veterans was stopped, per order of  
30 the United States Department of State and the Commissioner of  
31 the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and

32 WHEREAS, In December of 1945, Congress passed legislation  
33 amending the immigration and naturalization law, setting a deadline  
34 of December 1946 for Filipino veterans applying for citizenship;  
35 and

36 WHEREAS, On February 18, 1946, Congress enacted the 1946  
37 Rescission Act, which denied World War II Filipino veterans,  
38 including the USAFFE, the guerillas, and the New Philippine  
39 Scouts equal status as American veterans, which stripped them of  
40 equal recognition, compensation, and benefits; and

1 WHEREAS, In October of 1990, the Immigration Act of 1990  
2 was passed, granting United States citizenship to Filipino veterans,  
3 which allowed 24,000 Filipino World War II veterans, in their 70s  
4 and 80s, to receive citizenship, but who were still denied equal  
5 status as American veterans; and

6 WHEREAS, The course of correction has continued under  
7 Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and under many  
8 legislative reforms regarding health care, benefits for surviving  
9 spouses, and burial rights; and

10 WHEREAS, Most families of Filipino World War II veterans  
11 who are residing in the United States, have been longing to reunite  
12 with their sons, daughters, and minor grandchildren whom they  
13 left behind, between 1990 and 1995, when they were naturalized  
14 and finally established residence in the United States; now,  
15 therefore, be it

16 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
17 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California  
18 respectfully requests the President and the Congress of the United  
19 States to enact legislation granting veterans' benefits to the Filipino  
20 Americans who fought in World War II in the United States Armed  
21 Forces; and be it further

22 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
23 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
24 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
25 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
26 Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
27 States.

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